

St Marie's Roman Catholic Primary School, Bury

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105335
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	377227
Inspection dates	1–2 February 2012
Lead inspector	Angela Westington HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	251
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Adele Testa
Headteacher	Mrs F Robinson
Date of previous school inspection	5 November 2008
School address	Edward Street The Mosses Bury BL9 0RZ
Telephone number	0161 7643204
Fax number	0161 7644257
Email address	stmaries@bury.gov.uk



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Introduction

Inspection team

Angela Westington

Sheila Mawer

David Halford

Her Majesty's Inspector

Additional inspector

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 21 lessons or part lessons and all teachers were observed teaching. Inspectors heard a number of pupils in different year groups read and met with groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body and staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school documentation including its self-evaluation, its development plans, the records detailing the progress made by pupils and documentation relating to the monitoring of the quality of teaching. Inspectors scrutinised the school's procedures for the recruitment and vetting of adults and for safeguarding pupils. They took account of the results from 82 completed parental questionnaires and those from staff and pupils.

Information about the school

St Marie's is an average-sized school located in the centre of Bury. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly lower than average. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language are almost twice the national average: almost half the pupils are of minority ethnic heritage and a third speak English as an additional language. The two largest minority ethnic groups are children from an Asian or Polish heritage. A significant proportion of pupils, mainly of Polish heritage, are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is just above the national average. The school holds several awards including the International Schools Award, Healthy School status, Eco School Silver Award and Sportsmark. The school exceeds the current floor standard. This means that the school's results for 11 year olds in English and mathematics are above the minimum standard set by government.

There is provision for before- and after-school care on the same site as the school which is subject to a different inspection.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
 Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall Effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. Pupils achieve well over time because the quality of teaching is good overall and leaders, managers and the governing body are committed to ensuring that all pupils, whatever their backgrounds, make good progress and are cared for well.
- On entry to the school, pupils' skill levels are below those expected for their age group. Pupils make satisfactory progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards are still below average in reading and writing but average in mathematics. Pupils make good, and sometimes rapid, progress in Key Stage 2, so that by the age of 11 standards in English and mathematics are average.
- Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress. Pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs make good progress in Key Stage 2.
- The quality of teaching is good overall. It is satisfactory in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. It is good and sometimes outstanding in Key Stage 2, especially in upper Key Stage 2.
- The teaching of the core skills of reading, writing and mathematics is good in lower Key Stage 2 and outstanding at upper Key Stage 2.
- In Key Stage 1, the teaching of core skills is satisfactory and improving. The school has recently implemented a rigorous programme to teach letter sounds (phonics) and purchased new books to supplement the classroom teaching. In addition, pupils take reading books home every day and are heard reading regularly. However, the books that pupils take home do not support pupils practising their new letter sound (phonic) skills. The school has also purchased a new writing scheme for Key Stage 1. While this scheme has been introduced, the school has put to one side some of its previously effective practice, such as requiring pupils in Key Stage 1 to write at length, frequently. The school has already recognised the need to look again at how it brings together the various elements to ensure pupils make at least good progress in reading and writing.
- Pupils behave well. Their good behaviour makes a strong contribution to their good outcomes and to the safe environment in which they learn. The vast majority of parents and carers who completed questionnaires are very happy with pupils' behaviour.

- The school looks after its pupils well. The governing body ensures that all statutory requirements are met. Pupils of different faiths and cultures are embraced by the school. Parents and carers of children of other cultures and faiths expressed their thanks to, and high regard for, the school.
- The good leadership, management and governance of the school ensure that the school is focused on the right priorities. Managers and the governing body seek constantly to improve provision, the quality of teaching and outcomes for the pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in reading and writing by the end of Key Stage 1 by:
 - ensuring that pupils take home reading books which allow them to practise their letter sound skills
 - marshalling more effectively the various elements of the writing provision in Key Stage 1 so that pupils practise sentence building and also write at length frequently.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils enter school with skill levels below those expected for their age group. By the time they leave the school, they reach average standards in English and mathematics. This represents good progress over time. Individual pupils make outstanding progress, for example by attaining the highest level, Level 6, in mathematics, in the national tests. Outstanding teaching in upper Key Stage 2 contributes significantly to pupils making good and sometimes outstanding progress. In such lessons, inspectors observed pupils responding very well to high levels of challenge, engaging in intellectually demanding tasks and producing a good volume of work. For example, in a Year 5/6 mathematics lesson, pupils demonstrated clear understanding of long division, could confidently estimate how many 14s were in 217 and could move with ease between fractions and decimals. The work in pupils' English and mathematics books is beautifully presented, the result of a concerted effort to improve presentation across the school. The work in other subject books is not as strong. For example, the quality of writing in history, science or Religious Education books is not as good as it is in English books. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' reading skills are at least average. Reading is a priority in the school. Pupils read widely and their reading is guided carefully. For example, in Year 6, as part of their topic on the Second World War, pupils are reading a good number of novels based on this time period.

In recent years, standards in reading by the end of Key Stage 1 have been below average. The school has overhauled the way in which reading and writing are taught and has purchased a significant amount of new resources to support this work. The changes are still being embedded and the school has not yet found the right mix to ensure that pupils make good rather than satisfactory progress overall. Nevertheless, pupils are making good progress in acquiring and using letter sounds, although they do not yet have the right books to take home to support this practice. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress overall, although they are making good progress in developing early reading skills.

Pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs make good progress in Key Stage 2 where the teaching is stronger and as a result of well-targeted support. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also make good progress over time; the work in Year 6 books for pupils from different heritages is as good as the work of others in the class.

The vast majority of parents and carers consider that their children are achieving well. This view is accurate.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is good overall but it is not consistent. It is satisfactory in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. It is good and sometimes outstanding in Key Stage 2, especially in upper Key Stage 2.

Features of the outstanding teaching observed include:

- high levels of teachers' subject knowledge and clear explanations
- teachers confidently and competently assessing pupils' understanding throughout the lesson so that errors and misunderstandings are corrected immediately
- high expectations of what the pupils can achieve over time and within each lesson so pupils are challenged intellectually, are required to work hard and to sustain effort.

Teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory rather than good because it does not challenge pupils sufficiently. Improvements have been made to the way that reading and writing are taught but these are not yet well enough embedded to ensure that pupils make good rather than satisfactory progress. In pupils' books too much work is completed on worksheets, limiting how much pupils can write.

Good teaching and good relationships promote the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and ensure that they feel safe and secure. The wide range of extra-curricular activities also fosters their personal development. Vibrant classroom displays of pupils' work are testament to the range and breadth of the taught curriculum. However, there are too few examples of pupils writing at length in subjects outside English.

The vast majority of parents and carers that returned questionnaires believe that their children are taught well. This view is accurate.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils behave well. During this inspection, inspectors observed no poor behaviour. Pupils to whom inspectors spoke reported that behaviour is good; that bullying is rare and when it does occur, is dealt with swiftly. They say that lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. Attendance is above average. Exclusion figures are low. Racist incidents are rare. The school's records show that when racist incidents do occur, they are usually instances of name-calling and the school tackles the issue quickly and effectively. The records show there are no repeat infractions. Despite this being a Roman Catholic school, a significant proportion of the pupils are of the Islamic faith. They are embraced by the community. The

diversity of the school's faiths and cultures is celebrated and pupils respect each other's view.

A very small number of parents and carers are not wholly happy with behaviour in the school. Inspectors looked in detail at behaviour and consider that behaviour is managed well.

Leadership and management

St Marie's is well led. The governing body, the headteacher and her staff work as one to ensure the continuing improvement of the school for the benefit of the pupils. Since the previous inspection, the Early Years Foundation Stage building and provision have been improved. The standards in mathematics in Key Stage 1 have been raised to average levels and improvements to the teaching of reading and writing put in place. In Key Stage 2, standards have been consolidated. The headteacher sets high standards for the staff and pupils and in this she has the full support of the governing body. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and its development plans focus on the right priorities.

The headteacher is unrelenting in her drive to ensure high-quality teaching. She has taken some difficult staffing decisions to bring about improvements in teaching and has had the full support of the governing body. A range of professional development opportunities are used to improve teaching, including training by external consultants. Most recently, staff have undertaken training on how to teach letter sounds (phonics) and on the teaching of early reading and writing.

The school's good curriculum contributes strongly to pupils' achievement and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Extra-curricular activities are extensive; they are popular and well attended. They add significant enrichment to the curriculum and to pupils' personal development. Overall, the curriculum meets the needs of all learners but there is still more to do to address the progress of pupils in reading and writing in Key Stage 1.

The school ensures that pupils are well prepared for life in multicultural Britain. It promotes equality well. The headteacher is aware of the school's duties under the Equalities Act. Pupils from minority ethnic heritages, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs do well in school and are well looked after. Provision to foster pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong. The governing body fulfils all statutory requirements in respect of safeguarding and ensures that the building is safe and well maintained. Accident books, racist incident logs, fire drills and other safety checks are carried out or maintained appropriately. Given all this, the school has good capacity to improve further.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



3 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Marie's Roman Catholic Primary School, Bury, Bury – BL9 0RZ

As you know, I visited your school recently with two other inspectors. Thank you very much for being so friendly and for welcoming us to your school. Thank you especially to those of you who completed the questionnaires and who met us to talk about school. We could tell that you are very proud of your school and you are right to be! St Marie's is a good school. These are just a few of the things that we think are good about your school.

- You work hard and you do well. You behave well and your parents are happy with the school.
- The teaching is good, especially in Key Stage 2.
- The school helps you to grow into decent, kind and responsible young people.
- The headteacher, teachers and the governing body run the school well for you. They do their best to make sure that the school keeps getting better.

We have asked your headteacher and the governing body to look again at two things. We think that the children in Key Stage 1 could do even better with their reading and writing. We know that the teachers are already trying to make these better but we think that the children should have some different books to help them with their reading. To make their writing better, we also think that the children should go back to writing longer pieces of writing more often, like they used to do, as well as doing the new work.

We are sure that you will continue to work hard for the teachers and to help them to make your school even better. Thank you again for making us welcome!

Yours sincerely

Angela Westington
Her Majesty's Inspector

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